

***DOE Commission  
on Fire Safety and  
Preparedness***

**Subcommittee #3 – Emergency Response  
and Evaluation of Spread and Fire  
Fighting Risks  
Conference Call #5  
Key Discussion Items and Notes  
May 3, 2001**

**Key Discussion Items and Notes**

The following is a brief summary of **key discussion items and notes** from the fifth Subcommittee conference call of Subcommittee #3 – Emergency Response and Evaluation of Spread and Fire Fighting Risks held May 3, 2001. Conference call participants are listed at the end of these notes. The call was chaired by Garry Briese.

The **Next conference call** of the Subcommittee will be **Friday, May 18, 2001 at 1:30p.m. EST**. The conference call number is: 202-287-1019.

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**Key Discussion Items:**

- Independent certification and accreditation issues
- Contract standards and regulation issues
- Fire Chief's safety discussions of NFPA Draft Standard 1710 at the Fire Protection Workshop
- Perspectives from successful site fire departments

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**Next Steps:**

- Convene a teleconference with select DOE Fire Chiefs who are using best practices in the management of their departments.

**Discussion Notes:**

**Certification and Accreditation**

- DOE began the conference call with information on the proposal to require (in DOE Order 440.1) independent certification of DOE fire departments. Dennis Kubicki informed the Subcommittee that the DOE Headquarters Office of Nuclear and Facility Safety Policy did not adopt this proposal.
- The opinion from the Fire Chiefs, as expressed during their meeting in Augusta, Georgia, was mixed. Some Chiefs may likely pursue accreditation independently. Others said that they would do so only if mandated by DOE.

**Contract standards and regulation issues**

- During the Second Public Meeting in Augusta, GA there was discussion about the comprehensiveness of fire safety requirements in contracts. The Commission is very interested in assuring that an adequate (fire safety) standards set is adopted by DOE contractors.
- Commissioner Lamar expressed the opinion that it was important that DOE adopt standards consistently. He was concerned that too much flexibility was allowed by DOE in the

adoption of industry standards.

- A discussion about rule making ensued. The issue is how to effectively implement fire safety directives. This can be accomplished via rule making or inserting comprehensive standards into each contract.
- All agreed it is beneficial that the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board remain an advocate to ensure complex safety.

#### **Fire Chiefs safety discussions of NFPA Draft Standards 1710 and 1500**

- The Fire Chiefs still see the promulgation of NFPA Standard 1710 as a looming issue. There was discussion of exempting vs. meeting occupational standards.
- DOE should meet safety standards that are universally recognized and there should not be an option to “opt out.”
- DOE’s safety philosophy is to review proposed requirements from a cost/benefit perspective. DOE will, on occasion, tailor their response to the requirements.
- All agreed that it is essential to give the “tools” to those who will use best practices to improve overall safety, which can be very subjective.
- Fire Chiefs observations were shared. Unfortunately, they do not see any real change resulting from Commission involvement. They remain skeptical.
- Some Fire Chiefs are using best practices and making them work. All agreed that these individuals need to be empowered to institute change.

#### **Perspectives from successful site fire departments**

- Commission Members asked DOE for a list of 3-4 successful site fire departments.
- It was suggested that Chiefs or representatives join the next conference call to provide insight on what procedures lend to their success, other than the management team.
- It was agreed that Chief Gordon Berman from Argonne, who is also the Chair of the Fire Chiefs Committee, be invited on the next call.

### ***Next Conference Call***

**Next conference** call of the Subcommittee was scheduled for **Friday, May 18, 2001 at 1:30 p.m. EST**. The conference call number is: **202-287-1019**.

## ***Conference Call Participants***

- Commission Members
  - Garry Briese, Subcommittee Chair
  - Eric Lamar
  - Richard Salese for Mike Freeman
- U.S. Department of Energy
  - Frank Russo, Designated Federal Official
  - Dennis Kubicki, Senior Fire Protection Engineer
- Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
  - Bill Shields
- RPI
  - Bill Hamilton
  - Melinda Watters